

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 SS-15 INR-07 SP-02 /041 W

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R 051300Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1912

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: USEGJC

SUBJECT: US COMMISSION --JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

REF STATE 18780; CAIRO 1298

1. WHEN WITH PRIMIN HEGAZI TODAY, I TOLD HIM ABOUT THOMAS MURPHY'S AGREEMENT TO SERVE AS HEAD OF THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE PROPOSED US-EGYPTIAN COUNCIL. HEGAZI HAD HEARD ABOUT THIS FROM GHORBAL AND HAD ALSO RECEIVED A LIST OF FOURTEEN AMERICAN MEMBERS. HE OBSERVED THAT THEY WERE A VERY PRESTIGIOUS GROUP.

2. I THEN ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL OUGHT TO BE. HE RESPONDED SOMEWHAT GENERALLY THAT IT SHOULD PROMOTE TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THIS, HE RECALLED, HAD BEEN FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S CONCEPT WHEN IT WAS FIRST MENTIONED.

3. I NEXT ASKED IF GOE HAD DECIDED WHO WOULD REPRESENT EGYPT ON THAT COUNCIL. HEGAZI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD NOT GIVEN THIS MATTER ANY EXTENSIVE THOUGHT. AHMAD EFFAT HAD ONCE BEEN PROPOSED AS HEAD OF EGYPTIAN SIDE, BUT PARSKY HAD SUBSEQUENTLY EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR SOMEONE FROM PRIVATE SECTOR. THIS POSES CERTAIN PROBLEMS, SINCE THERE IS NO ONE IN EGYPTIAN PRIVATE SECTOR OF MURPHY'S STATURE OR EXPERIENCE. HE THOUGHT EGYPTIAN SIDE WILL HAVE TO INCLUDE

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BOTH STATE TRADING ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES AS WELL AS

PRIVATE SECTOR INDIVIDUALS. HE WAS CONCERNED THE EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATION AVOID PRIVATE SECTOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SIMPLY AGENTS. THE LATTER WOULD TRY TO USE THE COUNCIL FOR PERSONAL BENEFIT. HEGAZI UNDERTOOK TO GIVE THE COMPOSITION OF THE EGYPTIAN SIDE MORE THOUGHT.

4. I EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT SUCH COUNCIL MIGHT PERHAPS MEET TWICE A YEAR, ONCE IN US AND ONCE IN CAIRO. AS EMBASSY CONCEIVES IT, COUNCIL'S PURPOSE MIGHT BE TO (A) REVIEW TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE PRECEEDING SIX MONTHS PERIOD (B) IDENTIFY PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN (C) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS ON HOW THESE MIGHT BE OVERCOME, AND (D) BROADEN KNOWLEDGE OF BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES. HEGAZI AGREED. THINKING OUT LOUD, HE VIEWED THE COUNCIL AS A KIND OF US-EGYPTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE FIRST MEETING IN CAIRO AT SUCH A TIME AS MAY BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON. HE OPINED THERE SHOULD BE NO NEED FOR A SECRETARIAT OR PERMANENT STAFF. EXISTING ORGANS OF USG AND GOE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH NEEDED DATA TO CARRY ON ITS FUNCTIONS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMITTEES, BUSINESS FIRMS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAIRO01334
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750042-0268
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750271/aaaacmbk.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 75 STATE 18780, 75 CAIRO 1298
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US COMMISSION --JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL
TAGS: EFIN, BEXP, US, EG, USEGJC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006